

Redlands Daily Facts

700 kids fill Burrage Mansion for a holiday extravaganza



Ian Modrow, 7, of Loma Linda, picks out a gift during the Boys and Girls Club Holiday Extravaganza at Burrage Mansion in Redlands, Ca., Friday, December 16, 2016. (Photo by John Valenzuela/Redlands Daily Facts)

By [Kristina Hernandez](#), *Redlands Daily Facts*

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Anna Gonzalez-Jorgenson of the Redlands Bowl Association, sings Christmas carols as children from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside, arrive for the Holiday Extravaganza at Burrage Mansion in Redlands, Ca., Friday, December 16, 2016. (Photo by John Valenzuela/Redlands Daily Facts)

REDLANDS -- Members of the Redlands Fire Department brought a “spark” of holiday joy to 700 members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside.

During the nonprofit’s holiday extravaganza on Friday at the Burrage Mansion, local firefighters gave their time to help children select a new toy to take home in time for Christmas.

Toys given to the cause came from the department’s Spark of Love Toy Drive and several community partners, including local businesses and K-FROG 95.1 FM.

“Our goal is to serve the community and we do that in many ways,” said Redlands Fire Capt. Reggie Brown. “We as a department are community-based and community-driven and what better way to do that than by helping those in need.”

The holiday-themed event has been held at the mansion for eight years. The event has grown year after year. For example, last year 600 children participated.

Before the children entered one of two rooms filled with toys, they were divided into groups and escorted to a room where Santa and Mrs. Claus waited to share a holiday tale or two. The children also were welcome to take part in additional activities spread across mansion grounds, including arts and crafts in the home’s barn and a free meal. Tim Rochford’s nonprofit, the Rochford Foundation, made sure each child went home

with an age-appropriate copy of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," said P.T. McEwen, BGC's chief executive officer.

In addition to the nonprofit's partnership with Redlands fire, Friday's event was made possible by T-Mobile, Kaiser Permanente, Ross and Starbucks.

Fundraising for the effort takes place year-round. Monies raised covers all expenses associated with the event except for BGC staffing costs.

Children from all sites served by the BGC in San Bernardino and Riverside counties were bused in for the event. Clubhouses are stationed in Redlands, San Bernardino, Moreno Valley, Mentone and other surrounding communities.

To learn more, go to begreatie.org or call 888-822-6535.